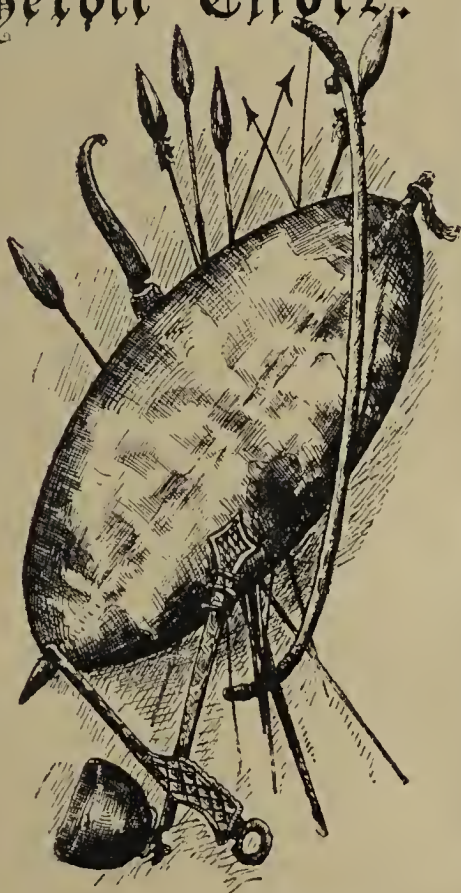


an African
Heroic Effort.



H. Rider Haggard.



An Heroic Effort.

THE Universities' Mission to Central Africa was founded by that great and good man, David Livingstone, of whom I will say only that I wish that his methods of African exploration

were more generally followed in these latter days. These were his words, uttered, I believe, in the course of a speech at Oxford, in 1857: "I shall return to Africa and die there, but I leave it with you to see that the door I have opened for Christianity and civilisation shall



DR. LIVINGSTONE.

never be closed." Those words are the foundation-stone of the Universities' Mission, and, I may add, the coping-stone of Livingstone's own life. As he says, with a just pride, he has opened the door—that was his work, and, in obedience to his invitation, the Universities'

Mission has passed through it, and occupied some few of the unnumbered chambers that lie beyond that door—chambers of a house which they would dedicate to God. That is their work, a work that has only been begun, for those chambers are not empty; every one of them has its evil tenant of ignorance or superstition, of lust or cruelty or crime, who must be expelled in this way or in that. It is something then, in less than forty years, to have crossed the threshold of that great house, and to have won a place within its walls, from which now we can never be driven back.

When in the year 1861 Bishop Mackenzie entered on his work, the mission consisted of himself, two clergy, and three laymen; to-day it has 89 English members and 104 trained native teachers, ministering to some six thousand converts, in a block of country measuring about 250,000 square miles. These figures are eloquent, so eloquent that I need not dwell on them. They prove that the Universities' Mission is a living and growing power. Such results, however, have not been obtained at a small cost; they have been bought at a great price and with the lives of men.

The other day I asked a friend who has travelled a great deal in the vast territories where the mission works what he thought of its mem-

bers. "Oh," he answered, "they are very good people; the only thing against them is that they mostly die." It seems to me that this was a pathetic remark, and, alas! it is a true one—the road of the Faith in Africa is strewn with the bones of martyrs. Where are Bishops

Mackenzie and Steere, where are Burrup, Pennell, Riddell, Wood and Pollard, Goodyear, Geldart, Scudamore, Sparkes and Knowles, West and Hartley, and many another man and woman, servants of the cause? I will tell you—all dead. Noble themselves, they have joined the noble army.

BISHOP MACKENZIE.

We have read of the persecutions of the Cæsars, and know how the martyrs of the Early Church died by hundreds rather than abjure their creed and offer incense on the altars of Jupiter or Venus. They were brave and faithful; but I almost think that, were choice possible, a man might choose to taste the terror of the wild beast's fangs in the Roman amphi-



theatre, or the sudden torment of the flame in Nero's gardens, rather than, after long suspense, to die beneath the spears of savages like Hannington, or, with an infinite variety of protracted suffering, to consume away in the slow fire of fever like Mackenzie. The children of the nineteenth century have learned many new lessons, but there are old ones that they have not forgotten—they have not forgotten how to die, as the Apostles and the Fathers died before them.

We have often heard missionaries disparaged; some of us may at times have joined in that chorus, and all missionaries have not been wise; it is not too much to say that many of them have given cause to the enemy to blaspheme. Men have left these shores to minister to the heathen whose object at heart was to minister to themselves, to better their position, to obtain political and social influence—perhaps even to win wealth—and these men have done great evil to their cause, since their shortcomings are told of where the virtues of their fellows have no notice. So far as I have been able to learn, after a somewhat searching inquiry, no such person has been numbered among the members of the Universities' Mission.

Before I pass on to the work, I would speak a few words of the workers, and, therefore, I ask

you and any whom these words may reach, if you know upon what terms these workers enter on the field of their labour? I will quote them.

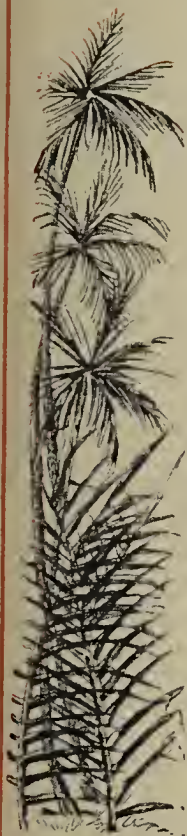
"The bishops are quite unable to offer any inducement in the way of salary or periodical holiday, ultimate pension, or temporal advantage of any kind; it is necessary that those who join the mission should do so with the single desire to live for, and willingness, if it be so, to die in, their work, because it is Christ's.

"The bishops are only able to offer to their fellow-workers, *who may need the help* :

"I. A free passage to Africa

"II. Board, lodging, and necessaries during their stay in Africa.

"III. Outfit allowance, £25, and £3 journey money; then, from the end of first year after landing, an allowance



of £20 paid annually in advance for clothes and small personal expenses. These allowances are to meet actual and current needs, and it is not intended that they shall accumulate."

Last year (1892) under this heading, £440 only was drawn—less than £5 per member.

"IV. A passage home, should health require it, at the end of three or five years' work, or at any time at which it may become necessary to return through ill-health; but this must not be understood to mean that every one is to return to England for rest after three years' work.

"V. Special agreements to meet special circumstances may be made by the committee on the recommendation of the bishops or the referees."

A free passage—£25 outfit—and £20 a year pay, which for the most part they do not draw, preferring to support themselves and others out of their own substance!

I confess that I am astonished, I am overwhelmed, when I think of it. The labourer is

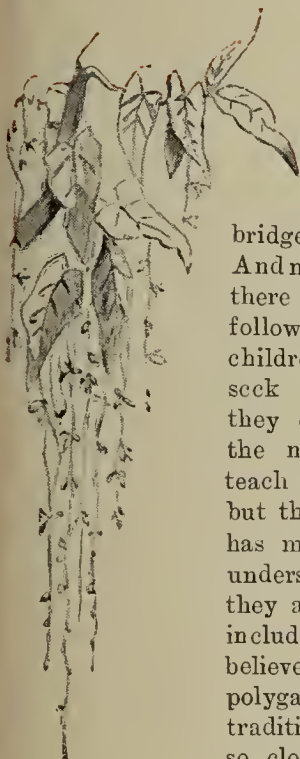


worthy of his hire, but what a hire is here! Comparisons, I know, are odious, but in this matter they are difficult to avoid. The clergyman at home, for instance, has no bed of roses to lie on, especially in these days of growing work and shrinking income. Still, as a rule, there is a roof over his head, there is decent food to eat, he lives in a healthy climate, and can mix in congenial society, enjoying the amenities of life. Lastly, except in very rare cases, he has something faintly resembling an income. All these things the servant of the Universities' Mission must be prepared to dispense with. Often he must be houseless and sometimes hungry; if he has wife or child, he must be separated from them; surrounded by many dangers, he must journey on foot beneath the tropic suns and through the tropic rains, till at length the fever gets a grip of him. En-

feebled in body, weariness and discouragement will overtake him, breaking down his nerve and temper, till at times he thinks that he is spending himself to no end. More, he must continually force his mind to a level lower than is natural to it, which is in itself a trial to a man of intellect.

The Fathers of the Church may have found a certain joy in matching themselves in argument against keen-witted and highly civilised pagans—there must have been excitement and intellectual pleasure in disputing with such a foe as Hypatia, and doubtless Thrangbrand, Wilibald's son, and Olaf the king, delighted in spreading knowledge of the White Christ after their own fashion—that is, by fire and sword—among the worshippers of Odin in Iceland and in Norway. Work in heathen Africa has no such alleviations; there is nothing triumphal about it, and very little that is emotional or even immediate. *Patience is the watchword, and perseverance must be the motto of those who hold aloft the lamp of God in the darkness of Central Africa.* Day by day the seed must be sown, often to wither in the soil, and day by day, sometimes with small success, the elementary truths and lessons of Christianity must be forced into the stubborn and unwilling minds of savages.

Has it ever occurred to you how many are the obstacles to mission work in Central Africa?



Putting aside the difficulty of inculcating supernatural faith into the heart of natural man, there are the climate and the vast distances unspanned by roads or bridges to be reckoned with. And more dangerous than these there is the competition of the followers of Mohammed. The children of the prophet also seek converts, and the creed they offer has attractions for the native mind. They, too, teach the existence of a God, but the paradise they promise has material joys easy to be understood, and here on earth they allow many indulgences, including plurality of wives. I believe that this question of polygamy, with which native tradition, law, and customs are so closely interwoven, is the greatest stumbling-block in the

path of the missionary. Certainly it is so in South Africa—for instance, I remember how, after much consideration, the great Zulu chief



Oham finally declined to become a Christian solely upon this ground: "How can I," he said, "put away those women who have been the faithful companions of my life?"

The Arab also has other reasons for hating Christianity and those who preach it, for they and it are the deadliest enemies of the slave trade upon which he batten. I have no time to enter into details of this iniquitous traffic, but I may say, without fear of contradiction, that the slave trade melts before the missionary like mists before the morning sun. Yes, it melts to return no more, for, after the English missionary, follows the flag of England—in my humble judgment, next to Christianity, the greatest boon that has been given to mankind—that flag beneath whose shadow all men are free and equal. This is not my opinion only. The late Bishop Steere—that saint-like and unselfish man,

that perfect mirror of a Christian—says, speaking at Oxford in 1874, “Nothing yet has ever uprooted slavery except Christianity. Nothing else will destroy it in Africa. Nothing else will destroy it in a man’s heart.” I believe these words to be true, and because of that truth the ties’ Mis-describe port, even not make a vert.

But they converts, make them and most manner, stand that vourite me-begin at end of life,



BISHOP STEERE.

Universi-sion would your sup-if they did single con-

do make and they in the best effective for I under-their fa-thod is to the right

to catch the

child and train him in the way that he should go. Also of these converts they attempt to fashion, not useless imitation Europeans, but good Africans. To enable them to follow this great and growing work they require money. I have shown you that it is not for themselves that they require it. I know that it is always unpopular to ask for cash, especially in these

hard times, when everybody goes a-begging for every conceivable object, but I hope that some of you may be able to spare a little towards this good end, and that you will find opportunity to induce others to do likewise. Money cannot be better invested, I assure you—that is, by those who look on it as something more than a means of personal gratification. It will not be wasted, and will not be unproductive. This is the day of small things, it is true; out of the thousands among whom the mission labours, as yet few are Christians, but, though we shall not live to see it, a time will come when the great English Church of Africa, numbering millions and tens of millions, will remember with gratitude those who fostered its beginnings, nurturing with their alms the grain of mustard seed, of which, in those future days, the boughs shall overshadow the African plains and mountains from north to south, and from the east coast to the west. We cannot all be missionaries—the profession would not agree with many of us—but we can all help a little, and in doing so forward the work of that Almighty and Omnipresent Spirit, Who, not far from any one of us, is near even to the heart of the poor savage you are asked to deliver from his physical and moral bonds. We can all help the good and devoted men of whom I have spoken to you to follow in

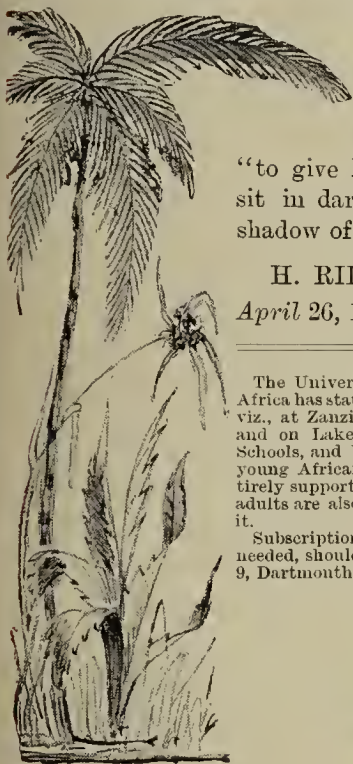
the steps of the Apostles and Fathers, who, not two thousand years ago, began their great work of the conversion of a world, and to copy the example of the first Missionary, that Divine Master of Mankind, Who went forth "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

April 26, 1893.

The Universities' Mission to Central Africa has stations at four chief centres, viz., at Zanzibar, Usambara, Rovuma, and on Lake Nyasa. In the Homes, Schools, and Workshops are over 2,000 young Africans, 500 of these being entirely supported by the Mission; 3,500 adults are also directly connected with it.

Subscriptions, which are urgently needed, should be sent to the Secretary, 9, Dartmouth Street, Westminster.





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